

Beef Barley Soup

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LARGE BATCH

Note: I soaked the barley overnight then cooked it ahead of time in order to separately control the length of time needed for the grain to soften. The barley can be cooked in the broth as part of the soup, but then there is the risk of other ingredients, such as the carrots, getting too soft.

Cook Barley

4 cups uncooked barley

12 cups water

1/4 tsp salt

Combine water and salt. Bring to boil. Add barley. Return to boiling, reduce to simmer, cover, and cook for 60 minutes or more if needed so the barley is soft.

Saute Vegetables and Herbs

24 ounces of mushrooms (optional, especially for localvores)

3 medium onions

1 large bulb of garlic

1 bunch of celery (optional, especially for localvores)

lots of carrots

some recipes include peas, turnips, and/or potatoes (if using peas, add them in the last 20 minutes of simmering)

ground dry thyme and oregano (go cautiously and season to taste with about a couple of teaspoons of each--some recipes use marjoram or sage)

Slice vegetables and saute them with herbs until slightly soft but maintaining some resistance to bite. Avoid overcooking and ending up mushy vegetables. (Note: the vegetables will have additional cooking time when completed soup mixture is simmered for 45 minutes.)

Mix Barley with Vegetables

2 pints of salsa

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

Mix barley with vegetables and add the salt, pepper, and salsa. Some of the mixture can be reserved to make soup or another dish for vegetarians.

Brown Ground beef and Add Beef Broth

2-3 pounds ground beef

1 quart minimum of beef broth (I use Swanson organically-grown broth, but a person could make broth from scratch or use bouillon)

Brown the ground beef, rinse it to remove fat, add beef to mixture of grain and vegetables. Then add broth.

Final Steps

The mixture could be frozen at this point, then more broth added if desired when the soup is thawed and heated for a meal. Bring the soup to a gentle boil, then cover and simmer for about 45 minutes to blend flavors. Adjust seasonings to taste. Add optional ingredients such as kale or parsley in last 10 minutes.

Or skip the freezing. Go ahead, add more broth if desired, bring the soup to a gentle boil, then cover and simmer for about 45 minutes to blend flavors. Adjust seasonings to taste. Add optional ingredients such as kale, peas, or parsley in last 10 minutes.